

2022



**positive vibes**  
Your mental health matters

# ANNUAL REPORT



# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

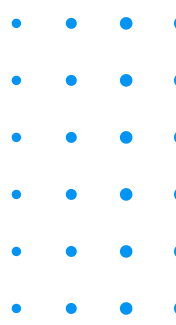
Over the past couple of years, our community has faced numerous challenges, primarily due to the uncertainty brought about by the COVID pandemic. The lockdowns, isolation from loved ones, and the lingering sense of not knowing when we can return to normalcy have resulted in unprecedented levels of psychological distress.

While we are gradually adapting to living with COVID and defining a new normal, we cannot underestimate the long-term mental health impacts it will have. It is anticipated that mental health issues will continue to rise significantly in the aftermath of COVID, making organisations like the Positive Vibes Foundation even more crucial.

Positive Vibes Foundation, like many charities, encountered obstacles during the peak of the pandemic. The inability to fundraise or generate income presented financial and sustainability challenges. However, in 2022, we experienced a turnaround with two successful fundraising events: the April fashion parade and the October Gala Dinner.

Additionally, we were successful in securing grants to support the Young Healthy Minds Forum and activities at the Hills Women's Shed.

Throughout 2022, our focus has remained on promoting positive mental wellbeing in our community. Our mission centres around the "3Cs": Communities, Connections, and Conversations.



We have been achieving these objectives through various programs and activities, such as the Young Healthy Minds Forum, the Hills Women's Shed, the Paw Visits program, and our community engagement initiatives with Hills Libraries. Major events like the monthly UPmarket and the Bunnings Charity Family nights have also allowed us to engage with the community and raise awareness about good mental health.

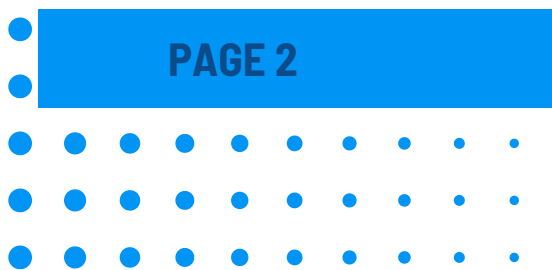
I am immensely proud of the Foundation and its accomplishments in 2022, despite the challenges we faced. We have made a positive difference in our community, and I take pride in our continuous growth and evolution.

However, none of this would have been possible without the enthusiasm, hard work, and dedication of my fellow directors. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Mario Rodrigues, Albert Seah, Jeanette Farrell, Peter Truong, and Mercedes Duarante for their unwavering commitment to our mission and the countless hours they have dedicated to making our Foundation successful.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Nalika Padmasena and Andrew McIver, who served as Directors in 2022, and welcome Susan Smith and Peter Truong to the Board.

In 2022, our Board embraced a more strategic outlook, which will continue as we strive to ensure the financial sustainability and adequate

resources for Positive Vibes. As our population continues to grow, we aim to maintain our current programs while introducing new initiatives.



I also want to express my gratitude to our dedicated volunteers who support us on a daily basis. Whether it's running the Hills Women's Shed, visiting seniors in retirement homes, assisting with UPmarket, or helping with forums, newsletters, and fundraising, their contributions are invaluable.

Special mention goes to Terese Wilson, who has been instrumental in organising two successful fashion parades, Juanita Rodrigues, who oversees the Gala Dinner and library talks, and Cobie Farrell, who manages our database and compiles our e-newsletters.

Additionally, we extend our appreciation to our corporate sponsors and partners. Without their assistance, we would not be able to achieve what we do, and we are entirely grateful to them.

It has been an honour to serve as the Chair of the Positive Vibes Foundation in 2022, and I eagerly look forward to working diligently with my fellow directors in 2023 to continue making a difference in the Hills Community.

*Michelle Byrne,  
Chairperson of the Positive Vibes Foundation*





# VISION

To promote positive mental health and wellbeing in communities through connections and conversations.

# MISSION

Embrace a holistic approach to address mental illness and wellbeing at home, work and school.

# VALUES

Honesty, integrity and transparency.

Collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Being respectful and inclusive of all.

Passionate and committed to delivering on our goals.

Affordable and sustainable programs.

Approachable, positive and adaptive to the circumstances.

Embrace innovation.





# THE HILLS WOMEN'S SHED

The Hills Women's Shed (THWS or 'the Shed') was established in 2018 as a safe and inclusive community space for women in Baulkham Hills. Our mission is to provide support and empowerment to women in need.

In January, we opened our doors to Afghan refugees, allowing them to access donated clothes from our generous community. Their gratitude was overwhelming, highlighting the significance of our mission.

Thanks to a grant from Resilience NSW, we also launched a Strong Women Program. This post-COVID initiative focused on hands-on

experiences, including car and home maintenance, homegrown produce, financial planning, fitness, and mindfulness. These activities enhanced participants' knowledge and confidence, fostering wellbeing and connection in the community.

Our first annual Fashion Parade in April was a resounding success. Shed members and Positive Vibes Foundation directors modelled clothes from a local boutique, accompanied by laughter, delicious food, and fundraising through auctions and raffles.

Throughout the year, we offered a diverse range of activities, such as multicultural cooking, gardening workshops, upcycling, dot painting, and mindfulness practices. An excursion to a Tulip Festival provided a delightful experience.

Due to the growing number of women seeking support, we plan to expand our premises in 2023, allowing us to assist more individuals in our community.

We take pride in the positive impact we have made, providing solace, inspiration, and strength to women in the Hills. The Hills Women's Shed will continue its mission of empowerment and support, making a difference in the lives of more women in the coming year.



# YOUNG HEALTHY MINDS

On 9 March 2022, we successfully organised our annual Young Healthy Minds Forum at the Pioneer Theatre in Castle Hill. This interactive and engaging event, facilitated by Burn Bright, aimed to educate high school students about positive mental health and wellbeing.



More than 100 students from various schools attended the forum, coming together to break the ice and discuss trust and mental health through games and activities. One of the highlights was the presence of Mitch Farrell, who shared his personal journey with mental health.

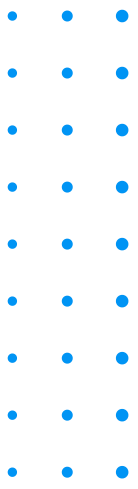


The forum also featured a Q&A panel composed of Mitch Farrell, Lachlan Gage (Student Counsellor), Dr. Tanveer Ahmed (Psychiatrist), and Ashley Ramirez (Psychologist). Students had the opportunity to ask questions and gain insights from these professionals in the field of mental health.

To conclude the event, students formed groups based on their schools to reflect on what they had learned and brainstorm initiatives to enhance mental health and wellbeing within their respective school communities. They presented their ideas to the forum, showcasing impressive and innovative initiatives.

Since 2015, we have hosted the Young Healthy Minds Forum annually, except for 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Over the years, we have reached more than 800 students and have made a positive impact on their families, friends, school communities, and the broader community.

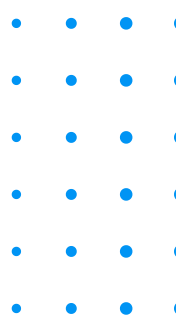

The Young Healthy Minds Forum continues to be a vital platform for promoting mental health awareness and empowering young individuals to prioritise their wellbeing. We are proud of the positive outcomes and look forward to organising more impactful events in the future.



# PAW VISITS

In 2022, we expanded our Paw Visits program by adding another aged care home location in Glenhaven. This growth is a testament to the program's success, and we plan to reach out to more care facilities later in 2023. Our volunteer base has also experienced robust growth, with numerous inquiries and enthusiastic individuals joining our cause.





Scientific studies have consistently demonstrated the positive impact that dogs have on our mental health, playing a significant role in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. They also help alleviate feelings of loneliness, encourage physical exercise, and contribute to overall improved health and wellbeing.

The Paw Visits program offers more than just the presence of dogs; it provides residents with an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and socialise with volunteers.

This interaction allows them to connect with people beyond their immediate family and close friends who regularly visit. The feedback from both staff and residents has been incredibly positive, with residents eagerly discussing their encounters with our furry friends until our next visit.

We are delighted to share that the positive impact of our Paw Visits program was recognised in the November 2022 edition of Hills to Hawkesbury Community News. Our story, captured on the cover and in an article, showcased the heartwarming moments shared between our volunteers, residents, and their beloved canine companions.

The ongoing success and recognition of our Paw Visits program reinforce the important role that dogs play in promoting mental wellbeing. We are committed to expanding our reach and bringing joy and companionship to even more individuals in need in the year ahead.

# positive paws

by BEV JORDAN

Alfie, Klea, Daisy, Marley, Oliver and Frank are four-legged volunteers who are making a huge difference to the mental well-being of residents in local aged care homes.

Positive Paws dogs and owners have been running regular visits to residents at three aged care facilities and now the Hills-based Positive Vibes Foundation is looking for more dog owners to take part so that the program can be expanded.

Foundation director Mario Rodrigues, who takes his dog Daisy, for fortnightly visits and says residents "cherish" the visits. He said one member of staff said: "A resident might only spend 2 minutes with the dog, but that's all they talk about for the rest of the week."

The Positive Vibes Foundation started the Positive Paws program about five years ago with just one dog, a 10 year old bichon frise called Hazy, to Arcare in Otlands.

"The residents loved her and so did the staff. We saw the positive effect Hazy had on everyone and decided to expand the program, to get more volunteers and their pet dogs into more aged care homes."

While COVID did put a stop to the program for over a year there are now 12 volunteers spread across three aged care homes being visited including Arcare in Glenhaven with visits happening on the first and third Saturday of each month.

"One of our dogs, Alfie, performs tricks to the residents' delight and all – residents, their families and staff – cherish these fortnightly visits," said Mario.

"The residents love cuddling the dogs and talking to them. Some had dogs before but cannot have them at the care home so these visits are very special to them."

He said volunteers get to speak with the residents too giving the residents an opportunity to socialise.

Ann (pictured) says she and Alfie have a lot of fun volunteering.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

POSITIVE PAWS VOLUNTEERS:  
Ann and her dog Alfie,  
Leanne with Klea and  
Steve with Ava.

Zawadi the golden Labrador

Frank loves his visits

COVER: Volunteers Rochelle with her dog Nelson, Mario with Daisy and Kerry with Murphy, outside Arcare Glenhaven.

"It is great to see the excitement of residents during our visits. Alfie loves the attention and we enjoy the residents' stories.

"One visit in particular stands out. As Alfie stopped beside one lady for a pat, her eyes lit up and she started chatting away to him. The staff got really excited, one with a little tear in her eye, as apparently that was the first time they had ever heard that lady being verbal."

Leanne (pictured) who has volunteered with Klea for four years said research has shown the benefits of "fur babies and good mental health".

"Visits to aged care are an absolutely fabulous activity and to experience the joy, laughter, chats with residents are in its self-rewarding and knowing I'm paying it forward each visit is gratifying," she said.

An aged care worker at one facility said: "Pets are a big part of people's lives and it is so hard when they move into care to not be able to have their pets with them. Our residents really love visits from Positive Vibes as it gives them a chance to interact with the animals, bringing back that feeling even if only for a short time. They are always looking forward to the next visit."

## GET INVOLVED

\* Positive Vibes would like to hear from dog owners interested in volunteering with the Positive Paws program and from aged care facilities interested in joining the program.

Mario said dogs need to be at least 18 months old (so they're past the nipping stage), up to date with their vaccinations, not an aggressive breed, and have a good temperament.

If you are interested in taking your dog to an aged care home, write to [info@positivevibes.org.au](mailto:info@positivevibes.org.au) or call Mario Rodrigues on 0414 747 603.

Positive Vibes runs a range of programs including The Hills Women's Shed and the Young Healthy Minds Forum. The aim is to make deeper connections and increase the conversation around mental well-being.

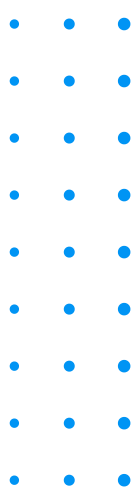
The Positive Vibes Foundation has an information stall at the UpMarket at Castle Hill Showground on Sunday October 23rd. The Hills Women's Shed meets at Balham Hills on Thursdays 10am to noon and every other Saturday 11am to 1pm.

To find out more visit [positivevibes.org.au](http://positivevibes.org.au)

# CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

One of Positive Vibes Foundation's three C's is 'Connections' with other like-minded community groups. Over the years, local community groups were able to support each other to promote each of their visions and objectives and also help other groups do the same. In 2022, Positive Vibes Foundation was able to connect with at least two other community groups with very positive results.





# UPMARKET

UPmarket continues to be an important avenue for Positive Vibes Foundation's contact with members of the wider community.

Held on the fourth Sunday of each month, this event enables Positive Vibes Foundation to engage with some 200+ visitors to the market.

There had been a lot of interest shown by market visitors at the Positive Vibes Foundation stall, and many volunteer applications had also been received.

Positive Vibes Foundation remains the only charity adopted by the UPmarket organisers and apart from the proceeds from the sale of plants and arts and craft items made by the women of The Hills Women's Shed, Positive Vibes Foundation also receives an annual donation from the market organisers.

In addition to physical visits at the Positive Vibes Foundation market stall, Positive Vibes Foundation also enjoys the social media facilities of UPmarket who promotes the Foundation as their sole sponsored charity.



# CASTLE HILL ROTARY

After a hiatus of three years due mainly to COVID, the Castle Hill Rotary Club resumed its annual Cross Country Challenge in 2022.

Positive Vibes Foundation was one of the key sponsored charities invited to take part in the fun and to raise funds to go towards mental health in the local Hills community.

We were able to set up a stall at the event and were able to share the work of the Foundation there.

At an Appreciation Night on 23 November 2022, the work of Positive Vibes Foundation in promoting positive mental health was highlighted, acknowledged and a cheque for \$6,000 was presented by the Rotary Club.



# CASTLE HILL LIBRARY

The monthly Library Talks held by the Castle Hill Library is a great opportunity for Positive Vibes Foundation to teach members of the community about a range of mental health-related topics.

Positive Vibes Foundation remains one of the key contributors invited by the Library to that forum, with Dr Juanita Ruiz now established as an effective presenter.

This important forum has helped Positive Vibes Foundation to be shared with some 200 people each year, and also for Positive Vibes Foundation to forge a strong relationship with the Library.

The 2022 library talk and workshop was on 'Cyber bullying and how to stay safe on social media', done in conjunction with headspace Castle Hill and Western Sydney Community Legal Centre.





# BNI GOLF DAY

Positive Vibes Foundation is one of BNI's sponsored charities and this was further acknowledged during the BNI International Golf Day.

Combining the love of the game of golf with a fund-raising objective, Positive Vibes Foundation was invited to be their sponsored charity for the event.

A great day was had by all and Positive Vibes Foundation was able to share in the resulting funds raised.

# BUNNINGS CHARITY

For the second year running, Bunnings Castle Hill has invited Positive Vibes Foundation's participation in their annual festive Christmas Market where a number of charities and local services are allocated stalls to display and sell their fundraising merchandise.

Behind a backdrop of a festive male acapella choir, children's face-painting, free hot-dogs and drinks, Positive Vibes Foundation was able to reach out to many families who heard about Positive Vibes Foundation for the first time.

# GALA DINNER

As the broader community started to move past the pandemic, the Positive Vibes Foundation was able to bring back in full the Annual Gala Dinner.

The event, held at the Oatlands Golf Club, was an opportunity to not only highlight the work that the Foundation does for the wider community but importantly to re-connect especially following a challenging COVID-19 environment and mental health already being a major problem within Australia.

The event raised a record \$25,000 and puts the Foundation in a strong position to implement programs next year to help promote mental health through deeper community connections and conversations.

These programs include The Hills Women's Shed, Paw Visits, Young Healthy Minds and further community engagement.

The Gala Dinner would not be possible without the support and generosity of our supporters, friends and volunteers, to all who helped in any and every way, we extend our heartfelt thank you.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Positive Vibes Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to the community and government for their overwhelming financial support, which enabled us to fund our activities in 2022 and part of 2023. We are immensely grateful to have received an unprecedented gross income of \$94,000 during the year, which played a crucial role in our operations.

Recognising the need for post-COVID assistance, we directed our efforts towards empowering women to regain their independence and recover from the pandemic's effects. In support of this initiative, we were awarded a grant of \$11,000 from Resilience NSW for the implementation of our Strong Women Program.

An additional \$10,000 was generously provided by ClubGrant through the Castle Hill RSL Club, specifically designated to support our 2022 Young Healthy Minds Forum. This funding took on even greater significance due to the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



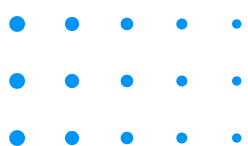
The outpouring of community support for Positive Vibes Foundation's important goals and programs has been exceptional. During our Annual Fundraising Dinner in October, we raised a remarkable net amount of \$25,000, creating a memorable evening of celebration and sharing the impactful work of the foundation.

In March, The Hills Women's Shed organised its inaugural Fashion Parade, a delightful and successful event hosted at the Castle Hill RSL Club. The local community's overwhelming support for this occasion enabled us to raise a net amount of \$9,000, which directly benefited the Shed's operations.

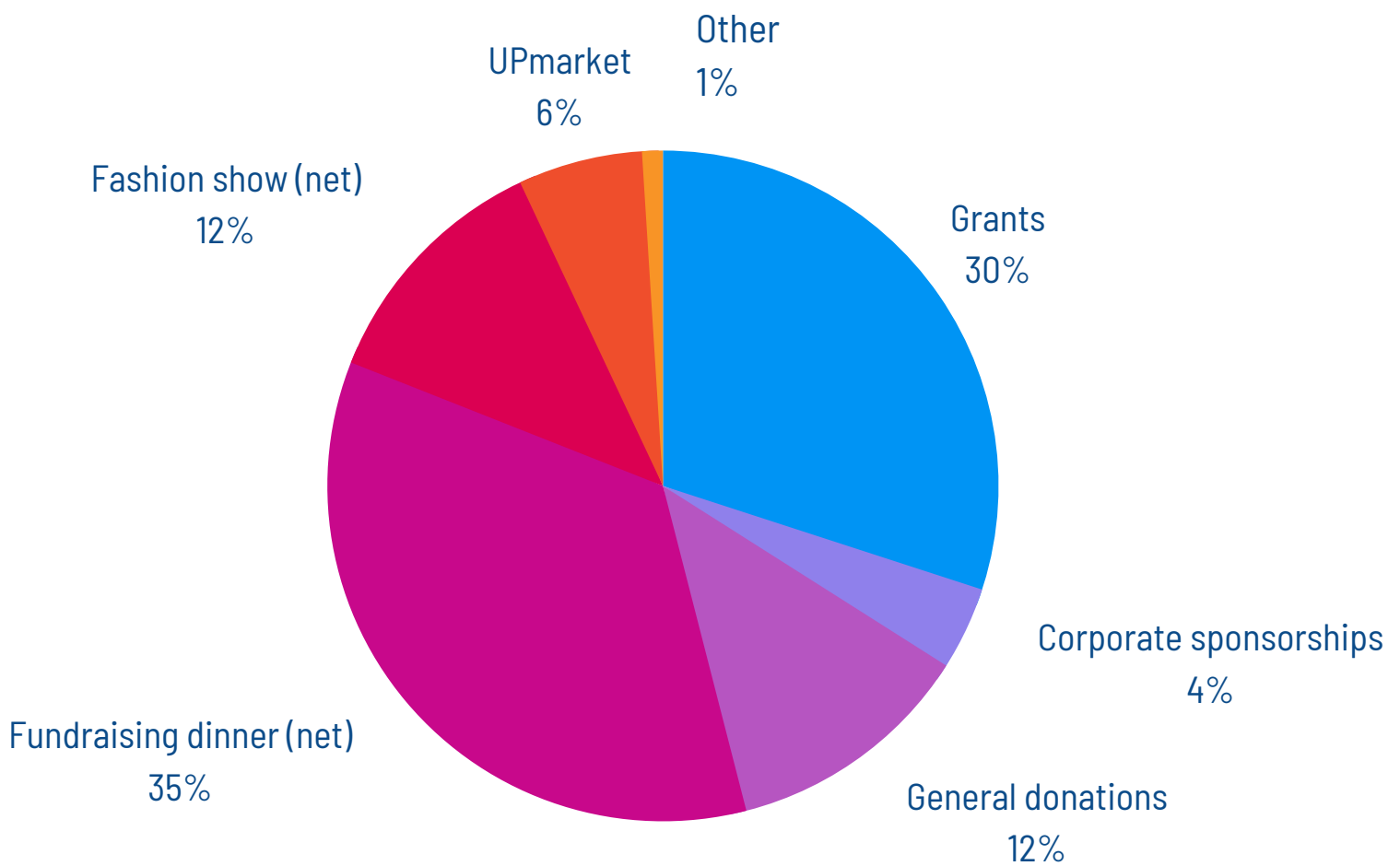
We would also like to express our gratitude to UPmarket, who adopted Positive Vibes Foundation as its sole Sponsored Charity and generously donated \$2,750. Additionally, we extend our appreciation to the numerous individuals who made cash donations and our corporate sponsors, including Manor Real Estate, for their unwavering support and commitment.

Thanks to the invaluable funding received, we were able to conduct highly successful programs, including The Hills Women's Shed, the Youth Forum, and the Aged Care Home dog visitation program throughout 2022. This support has positioned us well to face the challenges that lie ahead in 2023.

Once again, we extend our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to our cause, enabling us to make a meaningful impact in our community. Your generosity and support are deeply appreciated.

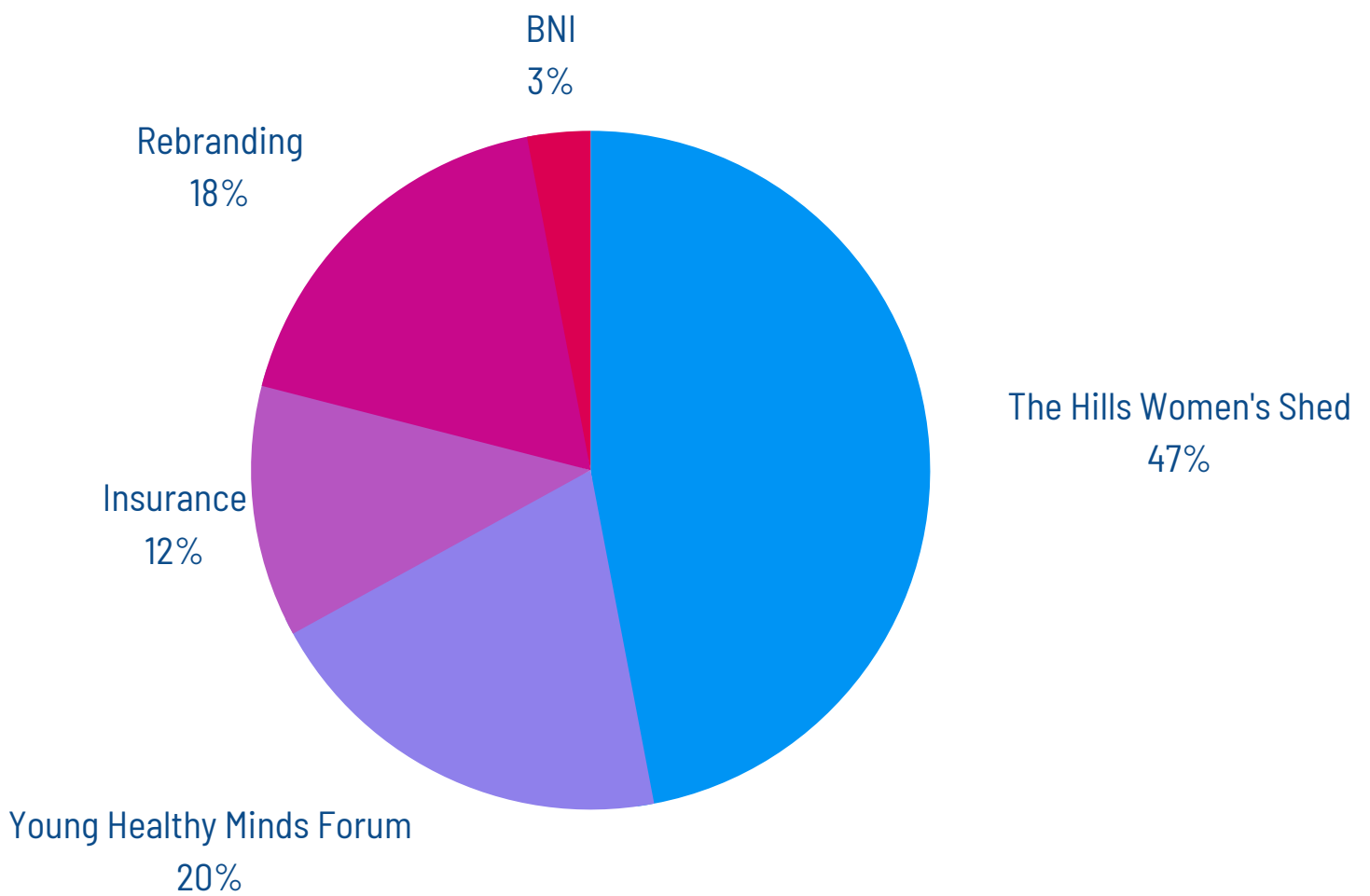


# REVENUE



The Positive Vibes Foundation receives revenue from a range of fundraising sources and charity events held throughout the year.

# EXPENDITURE



The Hills Women's Shed expenditure includes rent, phone, internet and consumables.

BNI support and donations greatly exceed our monthly BNI costs.

# OUR REBRAND

We now have new branding with new colours and logos. There are different logos depending on our initiatives and these represent our different streams while still tying them into Positive Vibes Foundation.

**positive vibes**  
Your mental health matters

**positive vibes**  
The Hills Women's Shed

**positive vibes**  
Young Healthy Minds

**positive vibes**  
Community 

**positive vibes**  
Paw Visits 

We also have a new website that shows our publications and provides opportunities for volunteers to engage with us.

Supporters can now also make a donation safely via credit card through this portal.

### Local community involvement

We run a number of different programs within the Baulkham Hills and surrounding areas in New South Wales.



**PAW VISITS**

Making the elderly smile with dog-friendly visits to aged care homes.

[Learn more](#)

**THE HILLS WOMEN'S SHED**

Embracing deeper social connections through regular community meet-ups and female-empowered activities.

[Learn more](#)

**YOUNG HEALTHY MINDS**

Working with high school students to improve mental health and smash the stigma.

[Learn more](#)

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Organising community talks to promote positive mental wellbeing.


[Learn more](#)



# SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

Hills to Hawkesbury Community News  
Rothsay Chartered Accountants  
Australian International Academy  
The Hills Shire Council  
The Hills Clinic  
Ovolo Hotels  
Robert Cliff Master Jewellers  
Bestway Corporation  
Caroma Australia  
Wine Country Retreat  
Micah Legal Services  
Lumby Hampson Real Estate

Katz Recruitment  
Manor Real Estate  
Mr Jim Taggart OAM  
Mr Brooke Collins OAM  
Mr Brian McCombe  
Mrs Lamia Wehbe  
Two Brothers Mediterranean  
Casella Wines  
Karin Murton Hair Design  
Nestle  
Desi Australia



# OUR TEAM



**Dr Michelle Byrne**  
CHAIR



**Albert Seah**  
DIRECTOR



**Jeanette Farrell OAM**  
DIRECTOR



**Mario Rodrigues**  
DIRECTOR

# OUR TEAM



**Mercedes Durante**  
DIRECTOR



**Peter Truong**  
DIRECTOR



**Jay Bacik**  
AMBASSADOR



**Dr Juanita Ruiz**  
COMMUNITY LIASON OFFICER

# CONTACT US

## POSITIVE VIBES FOUNDATION



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[www.positivevibes.org.au](http://www.positivevibes.org.au)



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Baulkham Hills NSW, 2153.

## STAY UP- TO-DATE

Head over to our new website and sign up to our newsletter.

## CHECK OUT OUR VIDEOS

Search 'Positive Vibes Foundation' on YouTube to watch our videos!